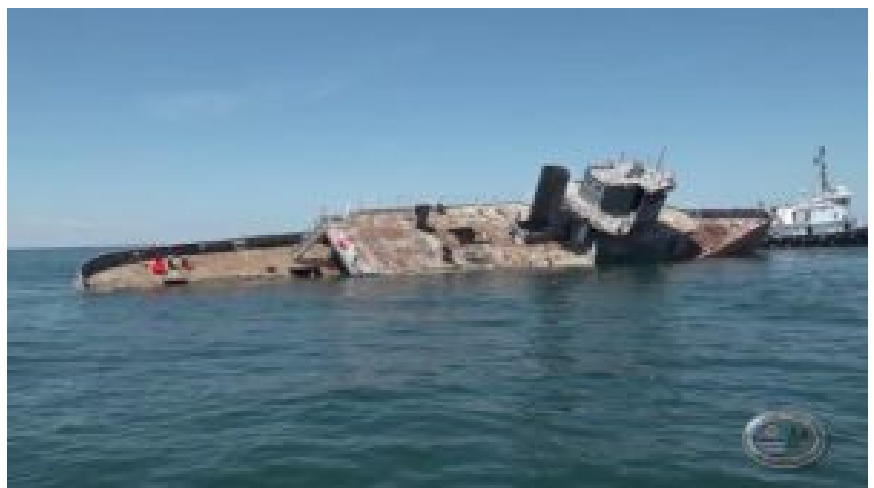


Delaware, New Jersey partner to deploy Navy tug turned USCG cutter Zuni/Tamara as addition to Del-Jersey-Land artificial reef

Famed vessel of both Battle of Iwo Jima and "Perfect Storm" renown sunk by DNREC on reef comprising military ships

ATLANTIC OCEAN ([38° 31.144'N 074° 30.747'W](#)) – The 205-foot US Coast Guard Cutter *Tamara* – believed to be the last surviving ship that took direct part in the amphibious landings during the Battle of Iwo Jima as the tug *Zuni* and later famed for daring rescues during 1991's "Perfect Storm" of the book and film by that name – was sunk today approximately 26 nautical miles from both Lewes, Del., and Cape May, N.J., onto an artificial reef that enhances recreational opportunities off the coast of the states that partnered in sending her down.



The Zuni-Tamara sinks into the Atlantic to become part of Del-Jersey-Land Inshore Artificial Reef. (View [video](#) or [photos](#))

The sinking onto the Del-Jersey-Land Inshore Reef was carried

out by Norfolk, Va.-based marine contractor Coleen Marine for the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control in partnership with New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection. Built and commissioned as harbor tug in 1943 in the Pacific Northwest, *Zuni/Tamaroa* was scuttled in Atlantic waters she plied as a USCG cutter for almost 50 years.

"The *Zuni/Tamaroa* has a renowned history at sea that now extends to Delaware's artificial reef system – which has earned its own renown by contributing to both the state's environment and economy, creating habitat that attracts fish, which in turn draw boaters, anglers and divers," Delaware Governor John Carney said. "Projects such as the Del-Jersey-Land Reef are a direct link to our environmental health and to what Delaware's doing economically in creating new habitat where there was none, and the *Zuni/Tamaroa* strengthens that link."

"The *Zuni/Tamaroa* is a boon to Delaware's artificial reef system that's supported our recreational fishing industry for more than 20 years by expanding habitat," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "Our reef system has grown steadily through DNREC's dedicated efforts and strong partnerships with federal agencies and our neighboring states. Reefing the *Zuni/Tamaroa* is another good investment in Delaware's conservation economy, both enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities and benefiting marine life by as outstanding habitat."

Zuni/Tamaroa was sunk on the Del-Jersey-Land Reef at a depth of about 125 feet, joining the former Army freighter turned Navy support ship *Shearwater*, the minesweeper *Gregory Poole*, and the 563-foot destroyer *U.S.S. Arthur W. Radford* – the largest vessel ever deployed off the East Coast as an artificial reef, and also sunk in a partnership with New Jersey. The Del-Jersey-Land Reef, jointly managed by Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland, was established 10 years ago specifically for reefing former military vessels. (The

[celebrated history of Zuni/Tamaroa can be found on the DNREC website.](#))

Plans to restore the *Tamaroa* as a living history museum fell through over the ship's advanced age and costly repairs that made such a plan unfeasible. Instead, *Tamaroa* was prepared for reef deployment by undergoing extensive environmental preparation that included removal of interior paneling and insulation and draining of fuel and hydraulic fluids. All tests were approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the ship also met Coast Guard standards for sinking as an artificial reef.

Older vessels such as the *Zuni/Tamaroa* are ideally suited for artificial reefs "because of all the voids and cavities in them below deck – the perfect sanctuary for fish," said Delaware reef coordinator Jeff Tinsman. "Not long after the sinking, the fish will start to come inside her hull and decks to seek protection from predators and bottom currents. Within a few weeks, blue mussels, sponges, barnacles and soft corals will attach themselves to the structure, and in about a year the reef will be fully productive – for fish and anglers alike."

Delaware paid for the bulk of the *Zuni/Tamaroa*'s acquisition, preparation and sinking, using federal aid in Sport Fish Restoration Funds, with matching funds provided by New Jersey DEP, which received support from [The Sportfishing Fund](#).

To learn more on Delaware's artificial reef program, please visit [the DNREC Artificial Reef Program](#) page. For more on New Jersey's artificial reef program., please visit [the NJDEP Artificial Reef Program](#) page.

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Vol. 47, No. 103

-30-